

PROMOTING CLEAR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY VALUES

It is heartening to see children lauded for their good work, whether it's an ovation for a remarkable performance on stage, or a parent and teacher expressing admiration for an essay or improved study habits. These kinds of accomplishments are so obviously positive and good that we can forget that home and school are not the only influences in our children's lives.

Increasingly, values come to children from sources farther away from home. Values often arrive unfiltered through mass media – via television, movies, songs, Internet, and magazines. There is no question that children often receive different messages from the popular culture than they do from their home and school.

Teachers have recently remarked that they have had to address increasing incidents of inappropriate language in the hallways and cafeteria. They have noted, too, that some students more openly express disregard for being diligent about schoolwork. We have also had to deal with some incidents of intolerant language recently.

At school we clarify unclear boundaries for students by addressing each incident of inappropriate or unkind language that we hear. We also remind students of their role in keeping our school a safe and comfortable place. Offensive language usually occurs where adults are less likely to hear it. We ask students to keep our school safe by seeking the help of an adult (a teacher, a parent, a counselor, etc.) when they hear or see harassing behavior. If your child expresses a concern like this, please pass it along to us.

At school we find that clarifying the boundaries of acceptable behavior helps students to monitor their own words and actions. It is the nature of early adolescence to test these limits. It is our job, as educators and parents, to keep our expectations clear for positive values and generous behavior.

If you have concerns about your child's attitude about school, or if your child has experienced unkind or intolerant behavior, please contact one of your child's teachers, the school counselor, Assistant Principal Candace Morell or me.